



Citywide Council on Special Education

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04/16/08 CALENDAR MEETING MINUTES

The Monthly Calendar Meeting of the Citywide Council on Special Education (CCSE) was held Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at 6:00 pm at P177Q, 56-37188th Street, Fresh Meadows, Queens, New York 11365. The following CCSE members were in attendance.

1. Roll Call

- Charlene Carroll-Hall Excused
- John Englert Present
- Maria Garcia Absent
- Charles Henderson Excused
- Diana Marenfeld Present
- Ellen McHugh Present
- Tom Ryan, Jr. Present
- Patricia Connelly Present
- Robin Murray Present

2. Secretary's Report

John made a motion to accept the CCSE Calendar Meeting Minutes dated 3/19/08. The minutes were approved as written.

3. Report of the President – John Englert

The monthly meeting with the Chancellor and the CEC's took place on Monday, April 7th. Some of the issues that were discussed included the lack of response from the School Construction Authority (SCA) and the Office of Finance and Administration regarding proposed revisions to the Capital Plan as well as the lack of support from Tweed in publicizing the role of the CEC's. Within the next month the DOE and OFEA will engage in a campaign to increase the awareness of the role of the CEC's within each community and school district. Also, the Chancellor agreed to have both Deputy Chancellor of Finance and Administration Kathleen Grimm and Sharon Greenberger from the SCA at our next meeting.

On Saturday, April 12, several members of the CCSE and the D75 PTA/PA President's Council met with the D75 Leadership Team and the Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning, Dr. Marcia Lyles. Some of the items discussed included:

- Shortage of Related Services providers and the poor communications with parents regarding how and when their children's Related Services mandates are being fulfilled. The DOE acknowledged that better and more timely/frequent communication is needed with parents regarding Related Services.
- Curriculum development, especially for the student population on the autistic spectrum, and continued collaboration with experts in the field.
- Transition planning is getting more attention, as is the development of/support for Career Tech for all children.
- Space/facilities – D75 leadership is meeting weekly basis to discuss the district's space requirements for 2008-2009. Although enrollment remains flat, the district anticipates an increase in classes as a result of the high influx of autistic children in 6:1:1 classes. DOE has assured D75 that it will provide the additional classrooms needed and does not foresee any space problems arising for the district in the upcoming school year.
- The Council of Great City Schools report on D75 (funded by the Broad Foundation) has not yet been issued.
- DOE reorganization – Dr. Lyles reiterated that the LSO's were not being disbanded and that the ISC's were not going to cover the boroughs.
- After school programs – D75 leadership reported that there are operational challenges related to busing and attendance. We were told that the Parent Coordinators have a list of the After School Programs in their schools. We requested a Program Directory by school and borough, listing each After school Program (and age of students accepted) so that this information can be communicated to the parents.
- Contracts for Excellence – CCSE members again expressed their dismay that D75 only received \$740K out of the total \$256 million awarded in 2007-2008. We understand that the allocation of the monies was not distributed to the children who needed them the most; rather it was based on the population of the individual Districts. We urged Dr. Lyles to work with her colleagues at Tweed to improve upon the district's allocation for the 2008-2009 year.

Members of the CCSE Busing Committee are reviewing and providing input on the DOE Office of Pupil Transportation new training modules for bus drivers and matrons and forwarded their comments to Richie Scarpa at the DOE's Office of Pupil Transportation.

Deadline for the 2008 Special Education District 75 Parent Survey is April 18th. Parents were urged to take the time to complete the survey as the results will be reported and counted in their children's School Progress Report next year. For more information, visit schools.nyc.gov/surveys.

The CCSE has been asked to review several Resolutions that have either been passed or are being proposed by the City Council:

- Resolution No. 467 which called for amending the NYC Charter. This had been passed and we are in full agreement with it.
- An ACT in relation to the Profession of Transition Linkage Coordinators in NYC. The CCSE is in favor of Transition Linkage Coordinators.

Finally, District 75's Annual EPIC Parent Conference was held on Saturday, April 5th at P79M. On behalf of the CCSE John Englert commended the district, especially Superintendent Bonnie Brown, and Sacha Inglis and Ray Velez of the Parent Support Office for their dedication to and many fine efforts in support of this important annual family outreach event.

4. Report of the Superintendent – Bonnie Brown

Bonnie Brown opened her remarks by saying that summer school planning was well underway. She went on to address many of the same topics raised by the CCSE at the April 12th meeting with D75 Leadership Team and Deputy Chancellor Lyles, and that John Englert reported on above, including:

- The DOE has extended the deadline for submission of the District 75 Special Education Student Survey (for those subject to Alternate Assessment) until April 30th. The DOE also left it to D75 school principals to determine which of their Alternate Assessment students were capable of completing the survey.
- When completed, the Council of Great City Schools report on D75 will go first to Chancellor Klein for his review, next to his senior leadership, and only then to Bonnie Brown and the D75 leadership team.
- Related Services – Bonnie Brown and her leadership team have begun a review of district data, comparing related services mandates in June 2005 to today. Some areas that concern them is that there are still too many 18 to 21 year olds with 1:1 crisis paraprofessionals and still too many receiving 1:1 Speech and/or Occupational Therapy four times per week (which in many cases began when they entered school at 5). Where is the progress? Bonnie Brown admitted that D75 has to do a much better job helping more students make the self-monitoring and other gains necessary to lead independent lives after they leave the school system. The UFT is not pleased with the Superintendent because she has been forced to cut back OT & Speech services to 18-21 year olds so that the 5 year olds with Autism can get the services.
- Space/facilities – D75 will be adding six sites (all new construction) in the 2008-2009 school year: 2 in Queens, 1 in the Bronx, 1 in Brooklyn, and 2 in Staten Island. Other current sites are being moved because the co-located general education school is being reconfigured (e.g., a high school program is replacing an elementary school program making the co-location of a D75 elementary program in the same building no longer appropriate). D75 has been assured by the DOE all facilities – computer room, library, gym, cafeteria, etc – in buildings with co-located schools will be equally shared by the special ed and general ed programs. All D75 programs sited in schools where the co-located general education programs have been problematic are being moved to an equal, if not better site.
- All D75 schools have received good Quality Review ratings this year.

Other upcoming D75 events and activities mentioned by the Superintendent:

- May 9th – P177Q, the host school of April 08 Calendar Meeting, will be renamed after its founding principal.
- May 10th – District 75 Best Practices Fair, at P721Q

- May 22 – Middle School Debate Championship at P811M
- May 28 – High School Debate Championship at P12X
- June 4 – D75 Technology Showcase
- D75 has been contacted by Adelphi University to explore a collaborative program and a program for students with Asberger Syndrome is being worked out with Queens Borough College.

In response to a question about audio enhancement technology being a part of new D75 school construction from a member of the audience, Bonnie Brown indicated that it is not yet being done due to space constraints imposed by certain class configurations (e.g. 6:1:4) and that the District is focusing first on students with cochlear implants.

5. Review of Resolution No. 5 – Keep the Promises to the Children

The resolution was read aloud by Vice President Tom Ryan and approved by unanimous vote of the Council.

6. Best Buddies New York – Mandy Fullmer, Program Supervisor & Kim Polswalski, general education teacher & Best Buddies volunteer advisor, PS185 in Queens

Although founded nearly 20 years ago by Anthony Kennedy Shriver (whose mother Eunice Shriver founded the Special Olympics) and with accredited programs around the world, Best Buddies is relatively new to New York. Unlike mentoring programs, the mission of Best Buddies is to enhance the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment. At the present time, Best Buddies in New York City is school-focused with programs in 4 local colleges, 3 high schools and 6 middle schools. Ms. Fullmer screened a video about the program and its impact and presented information about how schools can start their own Best Buddies program. Ms. Polswalski shared her experience being a Best Buddy in college and now as a volunteer advisor for a Best Buddies program (now in its second year) at the middle school where she is a 7th/8th grade ELA teacher. For more information visit www.bestbuddiesnewyork.org or email amandafullmer@bestbuddies.org

7. Providing Support in a Crisis: Behavioral Methods– Dr. Bobby Newman

Dr. Newman presented a detailed overview of the value of and some of the techniques used in effective behavior management programs that utilize Applied Behavior Analysis. He is a Licensed Psychologist, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and the Clinical Services Director for Room to Grow. Dr. Newman provides outpatient counseling as well as training and consultation to agencies and schools that use the applied behavior analytic methodology for students diagnosed with autistic-spectrum disorders. For more information visit <http://www.room2grow.org>